1 Interview Summaries

1.1 Ellsworth

Interview Type   Municipality
Interview Location   Ellsworth
Interview Date   October 17, 2001
Summary Date   December 9, 2001
Interviewer   Thomas Burns agismap1@maine.rr.com
Interviewed   Larry Gardner, City Assessor. Assessor@downeast.net
                        Staff Size (1)
Budget (approx) $80,000 (Assessor's Budget).
URL: http://ci.ellsworth.me.us

1.1.1 Agency Overview

The City of Ellsworth is at a strategic crossroads in the Acadia Region. It serves as the county seat for Hancock County. It has shown steady population growth, doubling in size since 1950. Ellsworth has an attractive main street, a historic town hall, a fiscally sound city administration and a vibrant local economy.

1.1.2 GIS Initiatives

There is no GIS program at the City of Ellsworth. However, the tax assessor recently negotiated a contract to create a digital parcel composite. The composite is complete and current. They also recently acquired a USGS DOQQ composite from a 3rd party consultant.

1.1.2.1 Overview of GIS Utilization

Other than the initial attempts by the assessor to explore his composite and learn ArcView 8.1, no other use of GIS is underway in city hall.

1.1.2.2 GIS Operating Environment and Infrastructure

A single copy of ArcView 8.1 is running on the Assessor's PC. They do not currently have a shared network for GIS.

1.1.2.3 GIS Data Resources and Requirements

The assessor's interest in GIS is the primary GIS resource the town has. At this point, they have a copy of ArcView 8.1 which the assessor is learning on his own, and three significant data sets. The assessor consults with the GIS Lab Director at the College of the Atlantic in nearby Bar Harbor from time to time, and, he has worked with the firm who created his parcel composite. The city is just beginning its efforts and the assessor cannot do it on his own.

1.1.2.3.1 Spatial Data

Existing data sets include:
Parcel composite.
DOQQ (digital ortho quarter-quadrangle)

National Wetlands Inventory

1.1.2.4 GIS Applications and Application Requirements

There are no GIS applications in City Hall and no plans for any.

1.1.3 Other Relevant Issues

- The assessor is very concerned that he would be considered the sole town staff member to push the GIS program forward. He is concerned that without help it would consume him and that he would not be able to do his primary job.

- Until recently, the assessor had never downloaded data from the OGIS web site because he had no experience with how to unzip a zip file, the initial format of OGIS data.

- The Assessor entered into a contract with a professional appraisal company to create an application that would allow a user to search real estate records at a kiosk location outside his office and on the City of Ellsworth's home page. Unfortunately, the application is not friendly nor fault tolerant. One must know the exact specifics and be letter-perfect when entering either the name, maplot or tax account number to access the data. As a result, the kiosk is used infrequently.

- The 1992 Comprehensive Plan is posted on the City's web page. A note from October, 2001 indicates:

  "a new web-site using a Geographic Information System (GIS) is available which shows a set of maps and supporting database information. The maps provided are NOT those which were generated as a part of the prior Comprehensive Plan cycle. These maps will be added to the GIS web-site shortly."

  While this note is promising, the web-site link (http://ci.ellsworth.me.us/compplan/cp_volume2_map) is presently disabled.

1.1.4 Major Benefits and Cost Justification

The cost of the digital parcel composite was modest. No immediate benefit was expected from this initial GIS data layer.